



ADOT STATEWIDE ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN



GLOBE DISTRICT – SHOWLOW AREA AGENCY STAFF WORKSHOP

June 28, 2006 / 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.

Show Low – South County Road Yard
East Thornton Road, Show Low

ATTENDANCE

Dale Buskirk, *ADOT, TPD Director*

Rick Powers, *ADOT, Globe District Engineer*

Richard Prior, *Town of Taylor*

Ruth Garcia, *RTAC*

Gary Fenstermaker, *City of Snowflake*

Ferrin Crosby, *Apache County*

Paul Esparza, *Pinetop Lakeside*

Bill Kopp, *City of Show Low*

Montana Slack, *Navajo County*

Dick Young, *City of Holbrook*

Tom Thomas, *Pinetop Lakeside*

Eric Duthie, *City of St. Johns*

Bob Ward, *City of St. Johns*

Seth Carpenter, *City of St. Johns*

Lynn Johnson, *ADOT*

Dave Swietanski, *Navajo County*

Consultant Staff in Attendance

Rick Ensdorff, *URS*

Caraly Foreman, *URS*

Christina White, *URS*

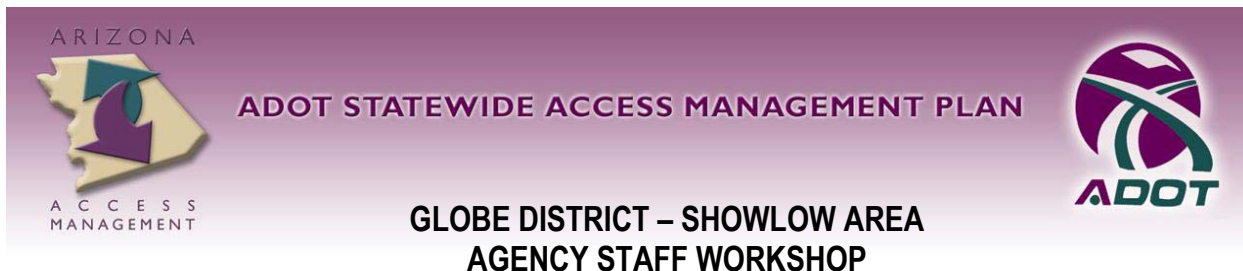
HANDOUTS:

Agency Outreach Meeting – Agenda (1 page)

Conceptual Access Management Decision Flow Chart (1 page)

Arizona Statewide Access Management Program Overview (pamphlet)

Benefits Of A Statewide Access Management Program For Arizona (pamphlet)



MEETING SUMMARY

An Agency Staff Workshop of the Statewide Access Management Program project was held on June 28, 2006 at the Show Low –South County Road Yard, Show Low, Arizona.

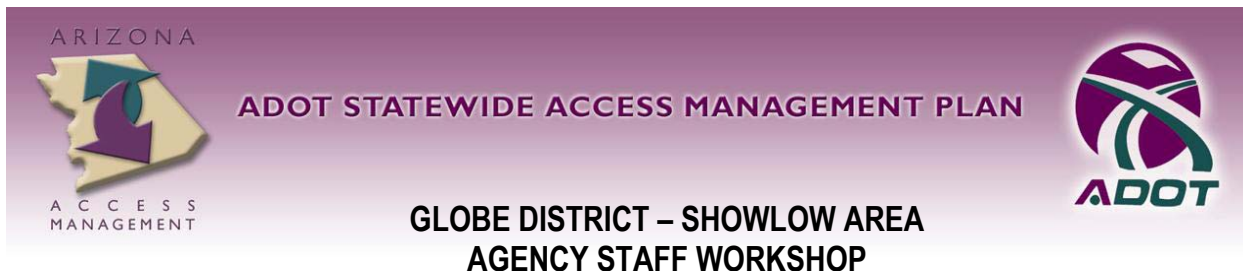
1. Introductions

Dale Buskirk, ADOT Transportation Planning Division (TPD) Director, began introductions and gave some information on what the project means, the importance of stakeholder participation, and stated that implementation is key to the success of the program. He noted that the mechanism for protection of operational integrity is through access management. He mentioned that through working with local entities that do have the power to zone so that, through access management and appropriate coordination of transportation and land use planning, there can be an effective access management program. ADOT has developed access management plans for specific state highways but it does not cover all highways or roadways. The access management program has been developed, as it is difficult to ensure consistency across all individual access management plans. Because ADOT is dealing with property rights, the program is moving forward intentionally slowly and methodically. It is going to involve regulation and will affect various statutes that ADOT has been working with alongside the Attorney General. Everyone needs to be on board, and that is why we are having an extensive public outreach effort. In addition to our agency staff workshops, we have previously met with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), regional transportation planning organizations, and other public agency and organization entities. All have been supportive and as a concept, the access management program has been enthusiastically endorsed.

Rick Ensdorff added that the program is much broader than just state highways and will also, for the safety of the public and benefit of businesses, will even look at street curb cuts accessing state highways. The program needs balance. We will work with you (local agency staff) on codes and, with your help and assistance, we will develop a good program.

Dale Buskirk formally introduced Rick Ensdorff and re-emphasized the importance of local agency staff participation and coordination between ADOT and local entities.

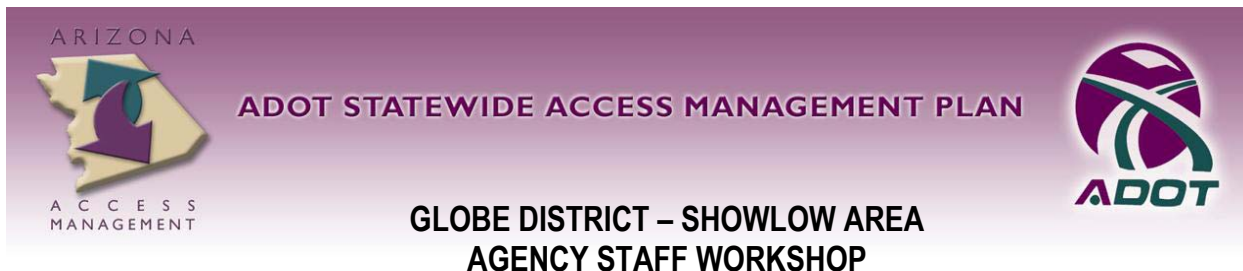
Rick Ensdorff thanked Dale Buskirk and asked the attendants to go around the room and to introduce themselves. He then gave a quick background of his professional experience. He noted that this was the 5th district meeting done around the state. He presented a brief summary of why the program is needed, and talked about the importance and benefits of Access Management Program, emphasizing that the program is about developing access management tools, techniques and resources. He proceeded to discuss how we got to where we are today, and provided samples of other efforts like the States of Colorado and New Mexico, and the objective of access management. Rick Ensdorff stressed that in order for this project to work; it would require input from all agencies and would need to be a partnership between the local agencies and ADOT. He also encouraged participation at any time during the presentation.



2. PowerPoint Presentation

A PowerPoint presentation, which is also available on the project's website, was presented and discussed the following:

- What is Access Management
- Access Features Typically Managed
- Benefits of Access Management
- NHCPR Report 420-Impacts of Access Management Techniques
- Crashes in Arizona, 2003, Access Related Crashes in Arizona
- Policy Initiative
- Arizona Access Management Program Work Flow Diagram and Schedule
- Access Decisions:
 - Access Permitting Process
 - Planning
 - Local Agencies
 - ADOT Construction Practices
 - Arizona Highway Projects
 - Right of Way Activities
 - Transportation Board
 - Traffic and Safety Programs
- Vision Statement
- Program Objectives
- Local Agency Perspective on Access Management
- How a Statewide Access Management Program will work.
- Conceptual Access Management Decision Flow Chart
- ADOT/Local Agency Coordination
- Classification System
- Access Classifications: The Heart of the Program
- Hierarchy of Access Classifications
- Access Classification Considerations
- Colorado Classification System
- Key Design Elements
- Waiver/Variance Process
- Other Considerations: Access Management Plans, Interim Permit Approval
- Brief Your Local Officials
- Business and Development Community Participation
- District Agency Outreach



The project's Vision Statement was discussed. Rick Ensdruff explained that we need to have a framework but it needs flexibility and a way to deal with "gray areas". Keep the program consistent and reliable while allowing local flexibility to manage access decisions over time.

Rick Ensdruff went on to discuss the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) establishment and composition. The TAC involves representatives from the following agencies, including ADOT, state engineers, senior staff, district engineers, local agencies, MPOs, and other public agency and entity leaders.

Rick Ensdruff briefly discussed the project's schedule, highlighting milestones, meetings and working with attendees to develop a program that best meets both the state highway system's and local government's needs. Referring to Dale Buskirk's earlier comments, we will be in an implementation "get the program up and running" stage at this time, next year.

The project's Vision Statement was discussed. Rick Ensdruff explained that we need to have a framework but it needs flexibility and a way to deal with "gray areas". Keep the program consistent and reliable while allowing local flexibility to manage access decisions over time. Critical to the success of this program is partnerships and a consistent approach to access management.

Rick Ensdruff explained that Access Management is defined as a systematic management of location, spacing and design of access roads and access points. Access Management includes state highways. The benefits of Access Management were further explained, including Safety, Mobility, and Economic.

Rick Ensdruff discussed that safety study data shows the more access points there are, the greater potential for accidents. Access Management accidents are defined as occurring at a driveway and state roadway, or, at an intersection and state roadway. Although currently unavailable, Rick hopes to have specific data for Arizona to share with agencies in the near future.

Rick Ensdruff then walked through the Work Flow Diagram. He mentioned that the Access Management has many benefits and again stressed that ADOT and local agencies need to start a partnership as that will be the key to make this program a success.

Per Rick Ensdruff, the agency outreach conducted, so far, has revealed that the procedures and policies are not consistent and do not have enough "teeth". He posed the following questions to the group: "What's going on in the region?", "What works?" and "What doesn't?"

The Access Management plan is to have all state highways designated with classifications. This workshop, and the previously held similar workshops, is the first key milestone in this project. This project is planned for June 2007 completion. The Management plan consists of several pieces - as outlined in the Access Decisions slide - it's not just permits. Access Management will be an everyday tool that will support long-term use and consistency.



The goal in Safety would be to reduce the incident of car crashes in a 50%, increase pedestrian and cyclists safety and to increase roadway capacity 23-45%.

Rick Ensdorff stated that legal review has been done with the Attorney General. A 3-page white paper is available. The Current study is nearly complete, providing an overview of where we are at now and where we are heading.

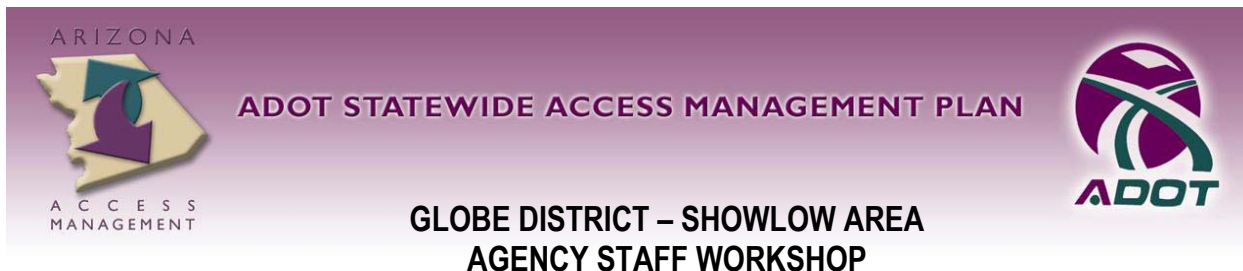
Rick Ensdorff then discussed the Decision Flow Chart slide. He indicated that the development of the Access Management has not been developed and that it will be by working with those in the room and additional resources. He also mentioned that Access Management plans are in place in the following states, Colorado, New Jersey, Florida and some in New Mexico and that Arizona can benefit from their experience.

Bill Kopp raised concerns about developers coming into rural communities and their roles in access management. He stated that, as state highways are often the main roadways to some towns and cities, keeping economic vitality is important to locals. If left-turns could be eliminated, there probably wouldn't be so much of a problem. As far as city policies, there are requirements for spacing of the property line. There have been situations where properties are getting ready to develop and have had access besides the state highway and there was a requirement to take that access out. He noted that his Planning Director wanted him to mention that with many property owners having development, they have had situations in which people went directly to ADOT and applied for an access despite conflicts before going through them or communicating with other local agency staff and got permits approved for access on the state highway. Ultimately, that impacts the local agencies.

Another city representative mentioned that the developers deal with them directly.

Rick Ensdorff mentioned that, often, developers tell the agency that they need to request a permit from that they have already communicated with other impacted agencies or that they have received the "go ahead" direction when, in fact, they may not have. Therefore, it is very important for ADOT and local agencies to regularly communicate with each other to validate information before any approvals granted.

Dale Buskirk responded that the growing trend is for developers to come into rural areas with increasing scales of development and requests for access management. He noted that today's developers are savvy and that almost every District Engineer can cite a case in which a developer may have probably played ADOT and local agencies against each other. On the other hand, many other developers have been very proactive and partnering with ADOT and the locals. He emphasized the need to cooperate sooner before the problem becomes larger. Rick Ensdorff agreed, adding that even if the local agencies can get ADOT involved as early on as the planning stages or as soon as a developer approaches them, ADOT and local agencies can greatly assist one another. Rick Ensdorff noted that with this program, the frontage road systems, internal subdivision roads, etc. would also be changed.



Paul Esparza noted that what works for them is that whenever a project comes up, they call a meeting with the locals, developer, and ADOT to work through needs together.

Eric Duthie added that their city does the same thing, except for volume. He asked if the process is planned to be the same for, for example, a three to five home access request or for a subdivision of properties? The small communities want to be consistent, to set the pattern now, and want the process already set.

Rick Ensдорff responded that with different scales, there are different levels of review, but also long-range land use accountability.

Rick Powers noted that every access point must first be reviewed and that we (ADOT District) will work with you on a case-by-case basis for these different scale needs.

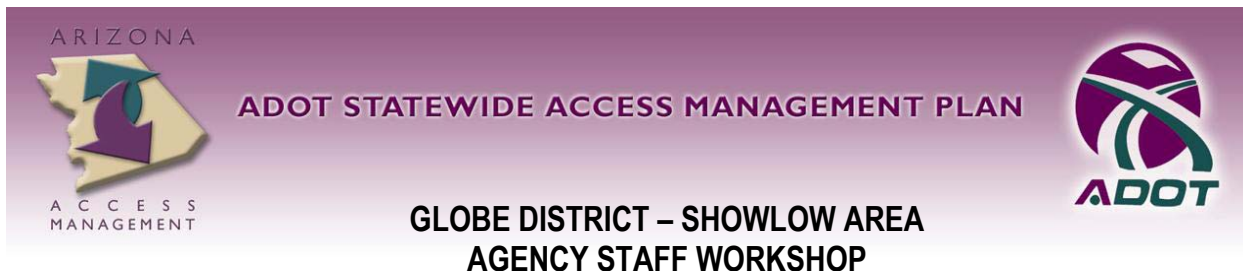
Dick Young asked if the Traffic Impact Analysis documents, for example, will these resources or guidelines be revised to support this?

Rick Ensдорff replied that we will work with you on these types of needs. This program is not about retroactively fixing things. It is about moving forward and making access management work for the future and over time. In cases of redevelopment or of change in land ownership or land use, then that land and its access management plan or requests are entered back into the process.

A representative from Pinetop-Lakeside asked if with their current roadways and state highways geometrics and traffic volume now increasing and street and curb cuts an issue, will there be a softening of median construction/development by ADOT? Dale Buskirk responded by stating that, as mandated by the State Transportation Board, it will not only be developed but also supported and implemented by all of ADOT.

Ruth Garcia stated that throughput is significantly being impacted by connectivity and sudden development happening in the middle of very rural areas. She asked if the access management program would address issues such as traffic signals in these rural areas as well as connectivity issues.

Dale Buskirk responded that there are a lot of components to this program. Providing intra- and interstate travel in a safe and efficient manner is part of ADOT's responsibilities and goals, particularly in providing a program that is flexible to realities but that is consistent to access management. In cases as she stated, safety will be part of both the consistency and review process for approvals or denials. When there is a development of 25,000 homes and over 50,000 people coming off of the county road to state highway, there are safety issues that have to be addressed. Remember also that funding – who does and who pays for what – always comes into play when there is a development impact. Timing is key - ADOT and locals are communicating before or when development is imminent. He noted that, for example, communities are, through their local codes, placing more responsibilities on developers to be responsible for paying for frontage roads.



Gary Fenstermaker asked if there was a way to put into law / require ARS statutes a requirement that a permit be in place and approved before development moves forward? He noted that communities might have a lack of staff and lack of growth to enforce the letter of the law.

Dale Buskirk replied that ADOT does not currently have land use planning or zoning authority or rights, nor does he see that being changed.

Gary Fenstermaker noted that communities do not have the legal assistance to challenge the plans of the developers.

Dale Buskirk noted that cities could create codes that would force the developer to abide by certain limitations and restrictions. For example, if the developer cannot afford to pay for frontage roads, then based on codes created by the city, the developer would not be allowed to build.

Rick Ensdorff noted that on the local side, there do exist statutes for cities and counties in their land use process that would allow requirements to be placed on developers. Aside from informing communities where access points are or will be, ADOT does not have authority on this issue.

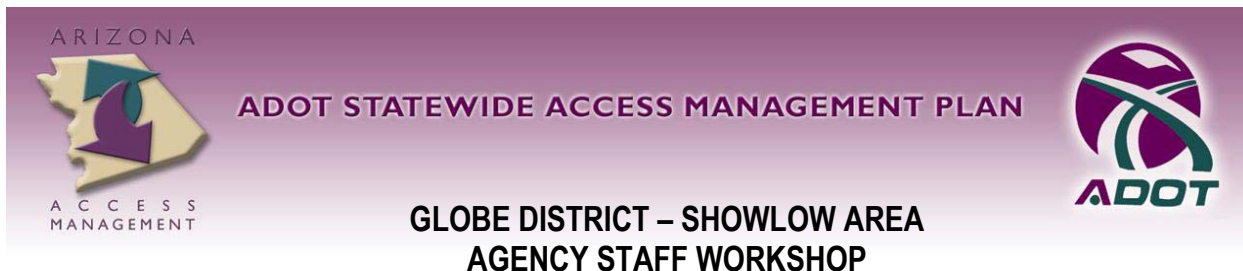
Gary Fenstermaker asked if the term 'access control' instead of land use planning/zoning authority be more appropriate and means that ADOT, in terms of access control, would have those rights? Locals cannot deny and do not have access control rights.

Eric Duthie, in agreement with Gary Fenstermaker, noted that the City of St. Johns had to pay for access impacts as a result of developments, which caused locals to have to tie into state highways. He would like to see ADOT meet with locals halfway on this issue.

Rick Ensdorff noted that locals have codes and regulations in their planning and zoning documents. Politics can understandably cause a gray area. The access management program will provide use classification, based on roads, which will provide locals with very clear design and standard limits and directions.

Eric Duthie noted that he can understand why locals would want to retain local control but also sees the benefits when the State provides guidelines and restrictions.

Rick Ensdorff responded that from his experience in Colorado, the access management program had been created from a strong partnership with locals to aid its development and implementation. Once it was implemented, many locals adopted it as a model and changed their local planning and zoning codes and ordinances to model itself after it, which proved to be successful.



Rick Ensdrff then returned to the presentation and discussed the “Access Management Decision Flow Chart” Slide. He noted that this process positively changed the dynamics of how developers approached ADOT and locals for access management permits. In already knowing the new access management classifications and criteria for segments of roadway that they wanted to develop on, they used the program criteria, did their homework up front before coming and then in bringing their requests to ADOT and local agencies.

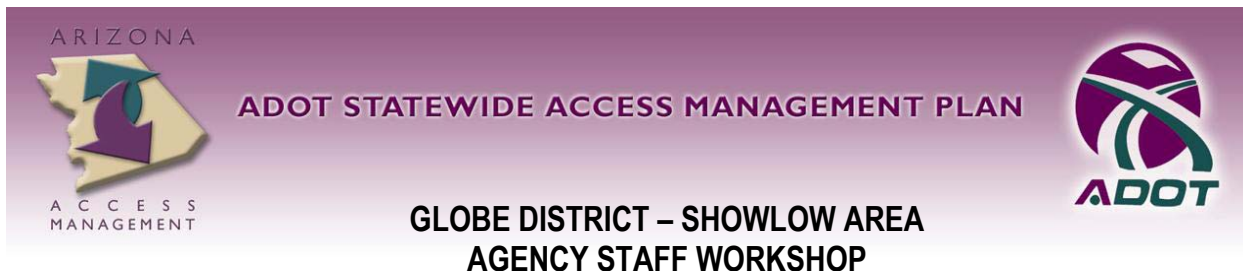
Rick Ensdrff provided examples of how diverse local agencies are throughout the State in working with developers on approving or denying access management permit requests, e.g., numerous meetings, planning assistance, conditional approvals, etc. This program will be looking at and this is where the “Who” (e.g., ADOT - Permits, Development Engineer, Others. Local Agency-Planning/Zoning, Transportation, Engineer Staff), “When” (e.g., How often? Scheduled meetings? Meet in person?), and “What” (e.g., What type of review, comments, conclusions?) will be decided.

Rick Ensdrff then proceeded to the “Classifications” slide in the presentations, noting that this is the heart of the program and what will provide day to day permitting action tools that support state and regional local transportation plans. It will also tie to fit local planning conditions and efforts. He went on to provide some background experience in this area. He also included additional Fort Collins experience examples, such as where the developers actually did homework before applying for a permit based on the classification system, which prevented “the wheel from being reinvented each time.” He also added that a classification system 1) Determines your expected performance, and 2) Provides day-to-day permitting actions that support the state and local transportation plans. Determining the classification process will be interactive between agencies and ADOT.

Rick Ensdrff showed the partial Excel spreadsheet for the state of Colorado's classification. There are circumstances that require flexibility, but those would be unique - not the everyday circumstances. As an example, in Colorado 90% of the time it is clear (due to the classification process and guidelines), but there are those instances 10% of the time where a more flexible option is needed. The clear and defined process at the core will limit those unique circumstances, however, it is known that throughout the project some tweaks will be needed. Rick Ensdrff again outlined the projects deadlines, the final report, including the classifications, which would be complete in June 2007.

As for amending or changing a classification after it has been approved, Rick Ensdrff pointed out it is a rigorous process. Everyone, the locals, ADOT, and State Transportation Board have to agree to these changes. Changing a classification is not common. In Colorado, there were only six changes to classifications in the first 10 years, and the majority of those were due to changes in land use.

Rick Ensdrff went on to outline some possible Arizona classifications. The plan is to have these mostly complete by the end of this summer. For the next workshop, there will be some real road examples and classifications. Rick Ensdrff also hopes to have examples for each specific to the area. So as not to surprise those at the meeting with this information for the first time, the plan is to update the website and send out correspondence. If you have attended this meeting you will be contacted with updates regarding this project.



There were questions and concerns expressed within the group of how the roadways/highways would be classified. Dale Buskirk responded that ADOT would work with local agencies to ensure that proposed classifications in their specific areas fit.

Rick Ensorff noted that local agencies would have lots of opportunities to provide input. Dale Buskirk informed attendees that classifications would not be locked in until feedback is received from local agencies. The State Transportation Board will be given a draft status report but will not take action in the draft until the locals have had their chance to provide input. Rick Ensorff mentioned, with the Access Management plan in place, that design guidelines will occur early in the process. Currently, most Access Management plans, for Arizona, are done during construction.

An attendee asked how many local agencies are involved in the metropolitan areas. Rick Ensorff responded that we have kept them informed and engaged by participating at and presenting the program through their already established authority advisory and planning groups either as an agenda item or at their regular scheduled meetings.

Rick Ensorff went on to discuss the next steps and action items needed for the program to move forward. He indicated that we need to leave them with important homework. We need them to go back to their organizations and to brief the local agencies and officials, especially the elected officials and senior management, about the Access Management Program. It would also be helpful to engage the business and development community. A letter, from ADOT, is being drafted and will be sent to elected officials in the next couple of weeks. Rick informed the group that the officials will have additionally available to them CDs, brochures, handouts, and the website as a resource and means of participation.

Rick Ensorff discussed the upcoming district outreach meetings schedule for the project. He stated that the next series would be in September and October for Classification Orientation and in March and April of 2007 for the Implementation Briefings.

The Access Management information can be found on the ADOT Planning site under http://tpd.azdot.gov/planning/am_statewideplan.php. In addition to the website, Rick Ensorff mentioned that attendees could obtain answers and provide comments through the email address from which Caraly Foreman had set up and from which the invitations were sent: ADOT_SAMP_Project@urscorp.com.

Rick Ensorff then asked for feedback on the value of this presentation to the attendees and asked for suggestions for the future ones. No additional comments were received at this time.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 11:30 a.m.